



PHOTO BY JIM ROBERTSON

## Vine Grove Police Officer Cristina Davis

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In her 18 years in law enforcement, Vine Grove Police Officer Cristina Davis has policed a wide range of citizens and communities. Her experiences working in both urban and rural settings have provided her a unique perspective on how to keep the tactical edge in Kentucky's provincial neighborhoods. Now as Vine Grove's first training coordinator, she is passing along that education and passion for a job done both right and safe.

**I am honored to share my experiences** in order to promote law enforcement as a career choice — especially for women. I am a qualified firearms instructor, and several years ago, I was told I was the first female to go through the rifle instructor course in Kentucky at Department of Criminal Justice Training. I was the first female to be selected on the SWAT team while employed in Concord, Calif.

**I am the police training coordinator** at the Vine Grove Police Department and I'm extremely excited about training the new recruits and lateral officers. I would like to write a book in the future about police field training concepts. I love to educate and train because I'm assuredly getting better and improving myself in the process.

**I once was asked by my supervisor why I do this job.** I pulled out of my sentimental folder a letter a citizen took the time to write thanking me for how I assisted her with domestic issues involving her ex-husband, who had been harassing her. The woman wrote how it had been the first time she felt safe. It is moments such as these that keep me doing this dangerous job with some not-so-nice clients.

**My 18 years of law enforcement experience is quite diversified.** I served in the U.S. Coast Guard and worked up to becoming a federal maritime law enforcement officer. I have worked as a police officer in the states of California and Kentucky, both at university and municipal police departments, urban and rural.

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**My husband and I met in the U.S. Coast Guard** and we both work as police officers in different agencies in Hardin County. We were both the slowest eaters in the galley — everybody had left and we looked up and it was just us.

**My passions are to help people and animals.** As a police officer, I feel I can do both. If there is a dog or cat wandering the street, I try to get it to a local shelter. In this rural area, I've probably killed more deer than most hunters because they were hit by cars and were suffering.

**Policing is usually the same wherever you go.** There are similarities working in urban and rural communities. You must have the warrior mindset to work in both and be suspicious of everyone with whom you come in contact if you want to stay alive. Yet, you must have the temperament to work well with the public. The crimes in rural and urban communities are usually the same, as well as the toll of long hours and erratic shifts.

**I constantly have to be ready to triage calls** and be ready to leave the call I am currently on for a higher-priority call. There are a limited number of cover officers, and I try to plan ahead and wait on suspect contacts and interviews until I have a cover unit available. There also is limited supervision, so I have to be more knowledgeable with the laws and be prepared for the consequences of my decisions.

**I hate to admit it, but** in rural patrolling, you at times sacrifice some officer safety and have to respond to calls by yourself that you normally would not. In working rural areas, I must work closer with the community and nearby jurisdictions because I recognize there is no way one officer can handle every type of call.

**Our city has great working relationships** with other agencies and nearby cities,

including the Vine Grove Fire Department, Radcliff, Elizabethtown, West Point and Muldraugh police departments and agencies such as the Hardin County Sheriff's Office and Kentucky State Police. Collectively, we have Hardin County well protected.

**Rural policing is more creative** because you have to do the job with a lot less. At night, when looking for a suspect on foot, I may keep my car running with the doors locked with all the spotlights on to make it appear that there are more officers at the scene. I have had to use EMS personnel to assist in looking for possible suicidal subjects, and Chief Stephen New with the Vine Grove Fire Department has assisted me in looking for horses on the loose and has assisted the department on many other occasions.

**I adhere to visible patrol practices** by trying to do most of my reports in the car. I like to change up tactics and locations where I do reports, and I take different routes to and from home so it is harder to predict where I may be at a given time.

**I believe the Kentucky legislature** should allow police officers to use work addresses on driver's licenses as a protective measure so it is harder for criminals to know where we live.

**Police work seems to have the highest highs** and lowest lows, and it can be hard to adequately explain to those on the outside looking in. It can be a thankless occupation and even hard to do at times, especially in a more blameless and litigious society. Despite all its pitfalls and dangers, I cannot imagine myself doing anything else. I'm extremely lucky to be working in a profession that I have dedicated my life to and with colleagues with whom I enjoy working. 🐾

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